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ABSTRACT

Drawing from evaluations submitted by staff, students, and parents, this report assesses Florida Junior College (FJC) at Jacksonville's College Reach-Out Program, a student recruitment effort focusing on increasing enrollment from predominately black high schools and junior high schools, in terms of the project's 11 performance objectives: (1) program publicity; (2) identification of targeted students; (3) non-academic skills assessment; (4) academic skills assessment; (5) academic components; (6) individual summary evaluations; (7) counseling and advice on college entrance; (8) workshops for parents; (9) role models; (10) cultural and recreational activities; and (11) program evaluation by students, parents, and project staff. A summary section addresses overall program administration and structure, including recommendations for program improvement, focusing on increased coordination and planning among different components of College Reach-Out and other retention programs at FJC; adjustments to the program calendar and schedule; and incorporation of some additional elements to increase student and staff motivation. (EJV)

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COLLEGE REACH-OUT PROGRAM

FLORIDA JUNIOR COLLEGE AT JACKSONVILLE

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

page #

Introduction..... 1

Program Publicity..... 1

Identification of Targeted Students 2

Non-academic Skills Assessment 2

Academic Skills Assessment 3

Academic Component 4

Individual Summary Evaluations 6

Counseling and Advice on
College Entrance 6

Workshops for Parents 7

Role Models 7

Cultural and Recreational Activities 8

Program Evaluation

Student 9

Parent 10

Staff 10

Summary 12

Appendices

Tally of Student Evaluation 16

Tally of Parent Evaluation 17

Tally of Staff Evaluation 18

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION
COLLEGE REACH-OUT PROGRAM
FLORIDA JUNIOR COLLEGE AT JACKSONVILLE
JUNE 1985

This evaluation is a result of the compilation of information obtained from written evaluations submitted by the Florida Junior College Reach-out Program staff, students, and parents; written final reports submitted by the program coordinators for each component (Counseling, English, Mathematics, Reading, Tutoring and Student Activities); and group and individual meetings with the program administrators, coordinators, and staff. The document is organized according to the eleven performance objectives identified for the program. These are:

1.0 Program Publicity
2.0 Identification of Targeted Students
3.0 Non-academic Skills Assessment
4.0 Academic Skills Assessment
5.0 Academic Components
6.0 Individual Summary Evaluations
7.0 Counseling and Advice on College Entrance
8.0 Workshops for Parents
9.0 Role Models
10.0 Cultural and Recreational Activities
11.0 Program Evaluation

The observations made in each section are a combination of the comments collected from both the written and oral feedback obtained by the evaluator. Pertinent pros and cons are included in each section with the inclusion of recommendations for improvement where deemed appropriate.

A summary section which addresses the overall program administration and structure with additional recommendations follows the sections listed above.

1.0 Program Publicity

Key representatives from Duval and Nassau county school districts were informed regarding the program's start-up for a second year. High school counselors were identified as the contact persons for each of the schools. A brochure describing the program was designed and printed for dissemination of information to potential participants.

The brochure is well designed and provides the necessary information. However, only eleven (11) percent of the students that responded to the written evaluation indicated that they learned of the program through the brochure. Fifty-two (52) percent of the students were informed of the program by their high school counselor. Thirty-two (32) percent indicated that they learned about the program through a friend or schoolmate. One student learned of the program through another staff member at the high school, specifically the Dean of Girls.

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Although the brochure was not identified as the resource providing initial information about the existence of the program, it was probably provided to the students by the counselors to provide additional information and for the purpose of sharing this information with the parent(s) or guardian(s). Thus, the brochure was a useful tool for publicizing the program.

Several recommendations were submitted for meeting this objective in the future. A slide show depicting the various program activities could be produced for use by both the counselors and program coordinator for recruitment and publicity purposes. Additional faculty and staff members from the target schools could be solicited to assist in publicizing the program, ie: principals, deans of students, curriculum coordinators, and classroom teachers. Another very effective resource could be former or returning participants. As indicated in the survey, peers have a significant impact on convincing students of the merits of the program.

2.0 Identification of Targeted Students

A meeting with the counselors on an earlier visit by the evaluator revealed that the counselors had a clear understanding of the types of students for which the program was designed. Reports from the teachers at the end of this years program confirm that appropriate students were selected for the program. The meetings with school personnel to delineate the information regarding the kinds of students desired for recruitment were apparently effective.

3.0 Non-academic Skills Assessment

The same instruments that were utilized in the initial year of the program, the Personal Skills Map (PSM) and the Career Placement Profile (CPP), were administered. The experienced gained by last year's administration provided for a much smoother process this year. The PSMs were delivered to counselors at the schools and administered by the counselors, rather than having a general testing session as in the previous year. This eliminated the problem of having to schedule make-up sessions which presented a problem last year. Students could be tested individually at their home school if they missed the initial administration. These were scored by the publishing company and a graphic profile was provided for each student. The CPP was administered, scored, and interpreted for each student by the Career Placement Center on the downtown campus.

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These instruments continue to provide an adequate assessment of the non-academic skills of the individual participants and provide impetus and information for the counseling sessions.

4.0 Academic Skills Assessment

The McGraw-Hill Writing Skills Assessment, the Stanford Reading Assessment, and a developmental test designed by the mathematics coordinator were administered by the component coordinators as a pre-test. Students were placed in the appropriate academic classes based on the results of this pretesting. (It should be noted that one reading teacher responded in the written evaluation that s/he did not receive the pretest results for his or her students.)

For a variety of reasons indicated by both the staff and students, e.g. schedule conflicts and lack of motivation, sporadic attendance was the primary problem for the program this year. Teachers felt that the scheduling of the counseling sessions for a full session (three hours) once a month compounded the absentee problem since the end result was extended periods of time in which they did not work with a particular student. In addition to this, inclement weather forced a Saturday session to be cancelled, necessitating a schedule modification. This resulted in another instance when teachers were unable to meet with students. Based on these factors, the teachers recommended that posttests not be administered. Albeit the circumstances, the evaluator questions the decision not to administer the posttest. The results of the posttest would have certainly reflected the inconsistent attendance. However, at this point there are no data for documenting any progress for any students. Nor are there data for comparing progress of those who did attend consistently or more regularly than those that did not.

There also appears to have been either a change in opinion by the staff or a break down in communication. At the time the decision was made to cancel the posttests there appeared to be a consensus from the teachers and coordinators that this was the preferred action. Yet, several staff members indicated their concern regarding the lack of a posttest for their particular area in the evaluation process.

It is strongly recommended that in the future, regardless of the circumstances which may affect the scores, pre and post academic assessments be administered. Recommendations regarding improving attendance will be addressed in the summary section.

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5.0 Academic Component

In response to the question "Which of your classes were most helpful to you?", twenty-six (26) percent of the students answered Math, another twenty-six (26) percent said English, Reading was selected by eighteen (18) percent, and Computer Literacy and Counseling each received fifteen (15) percent.

On a Likert-type scale of 1 to 4, "1" indicating "strongly disagree" and "4" indicating "strongly agree", the average rating by parents to the statement "My son/daughter's skills improved in one or all of the following Mathematics, English and Reading as a result of participating in the program" was a 3.07.

The overall response of the teachers and staff members to the effectiveness of the academic component was very positive. On the same Likert-type scale used on the parent's evaluation, teachers responded as follows:

Average Rating	Statement on Evaluation Form
3.72	Students participating in the program received services that will have a positive impact on their chances for participating and being successful in post-secondary education.
3.64	The members of the staff were skilled in their particular areas.
3.72	The members of the staff were sensitive to the needs of the students.

There were overwhelmingly positive comments regarding the establishment of the "Brain Bowl" as a part of the program. Suggestions for expanding this activity included forming several teams for internal program competition and including the final "Brain Bowl" competition in the Awards Day events. An essay contest was also proposed.

Recommendations were also made to include more oral reports in the English classes and to design a unit to incorporate the teaching of research skills in this component.

One coordinator recommended that a study be conducted to assess which kinds of teachers are more innovative in the classroom to facilitate staff selection. It was also his or

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her observation that it is important to have teachers more representative of the college environment so that students are exposed to all "kinds". It is the opinion of this evaluator that the students are exposed to all "kinds" of teachers in the regular school setting. It is more important to have teachers that are skilled in motivating students to become excited about learning. There are many college professors that do just the opposite and it will not behoove the students to encounter them in this program.

Another very valuable suggestion was the utilization of FJC work-study students as teacher aids/tutors for the participants. It is further recommended by the evaluator that a supplemental instruction model be considered for implementation with the tutoring program. This model incorporates the process of learning with the actual course content. Tutors attend the actual classes with the students; then work with them in small group settings to teach study skills as well as review the course materials. Students learn new study skills via role modeling from the tutor and their peers in a non-threatening environment.

The integration of the curriculum for the various components is strongly advised. Not just the English and reading components, but all of the components should be inextricably intertwined. Students should be writing essays about the cultural enrichment activities, career education information, biographical information regarding role models, and information on the history and application of computers. Of course the materials that have to be read in order to write the papers will be the texts for the reading class. Vocabulary and spelling words should be extricated from the mathematics, reading, and counseling and extra-curricular activities. Students should be given an opportunity in the computer lab to use word processing software to write and edit their English papers. The reinforcement that each of the units will provide for the others would undoubtedly produce much greater gains in post-test scores.

As indicated in the previous section, teachers had a concern regarding the schedule. They felt that the "gaps" between the times that they met with the students were counter-productive. Several teachers recommended that counseling not be scheduled for an entire morning session, because it precludes the classes from meeting "every" week. Recommendations regarding this element will be addressed in the summary because there are additional recommendations regarding this same issue in a subsequent section.

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6.0 Individual Summary Evaluations

Each instructor provided a summary evaluation for each student in his/her class. These progress reports are mailed home to the student and his/her parent(s) or guardians. The progress reports are non-threatening because they are not "grade" oriented. "Progress" focuses on the positive rather than concentrating on difficiences. The importance of utilizing non-traditional methods of teaching and evaluating with the students cannot be overemphasized. Replicating the regular grading system would defeat the purpose of the program, thus this method of individual evaluations was quite appropriate.

7.0 Counseling and Advice on College Entrance

The curriculum designed for the counseling component was well thought out and an excellent manual was prepared for use by the counselors in conducting the group activities.

Students were asked "How were the session(s) with the counselors helpful to you?" Eighteen (18) percent of the students lauded the study skills session; fifteen (15) percent found the career development sessions to be the most helpful; twelve (12) percent identified the decision making skills to be very useful, while another twelve (12) percent mentioned the opportunity to participate in small group discussions and getting to know the other students. Self-esteem exercises, goal-setting, and the opportunity for self-expression were equally important to the students with nine (9) percent of the students selecting each one of these sessions; information regarding society and the environment completed the choices by being selected by three (3) percent of the students.

Feedback given by the instructors during the 1984 end-of-year evaluation session indicated a concern that the counseling sessions (which were held on a weekly basis along with the academic classes) were impinging on "their" time. Thus, the decision was made to have the counseling sessions on a separate Saturday every fourth week. This year's feedback from the students indicated that they felt the three hour sessions were too long. Students expressed a desire to have counseling sessions that are shorter but more frequent. The counselors also indicated in their individual and group evaluations that they would prefer to meet with the students more often.

The counseling classes for this year were grouped heterogeneously. The counselors have also expressed a desire to

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have a homogeneous group by grouping them by grade level. This would facilitate the college planning and advising that is done for the seniors in the program.

Parents were quite pleased with the information given to both them and their students about college admissions. Eighty-five (85) percent responded that their son or daughter better realized the benefits of attending college as a result of participation in the program.

There is a concern for counselors to be able to better assist those students who are interested in attending FJC. An in-service training session for the counselors to provide them with advising information for the college was one of the requests submitted by the staff.

8.0 Workshops for Parents

The parents rated the parent-student orientation program very highly. They felt that they were provided with adequate information regarding the intent of the program. The parents were also invited to attend the counseling sessions "What is Expected of Me in College?" and "FJC Program Offerings." They indicated that they are more aware of enrolling their son or daughter in college as a result of these programs. Accolades were given in the "additional comments" section by the parents who responded to the written evaluation.

9.0 Role Models

Two minority male role models were invited to speak to the participants during the term of the program this year. Mr. Larry Brody, a popular radio personality, spoke at the Parent-Student Orientation. Mr. Kenneth Johnson, a former member of the Board of Trustees for Florida Junior College and a prominent community businessman was the speaker for the awards program. Plans had also been made to invite a professional female to speak at a student assembly, but those plans had to be altered because of a lack of available time during the particular assembly.

It is the opinion of the evaluator that role models are a key component in a program of this nature. Currently all of the role models have been included through activities outside of the classroom. With more integration of the planning and implementation of the individual components, it would be easier to include more role models by inviting these persons to speak to the academic classes. The more

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diversified that group of role models are the better. In addition to including females in this category, efforts should be made to seek out minorities in non-traditional careers. This will augment the career development section of the counseling component as well as the development of self-esteem which should be an objective of all of the components.

10.0 Cultural and Recreational Activities

All of the activities proposed to meet this objective were held as scheduled. There were a total of eleven events with an average attendance of eighty-four (84) participants at each event. The events were diverse in nature and included academic, cultural, recreational, and social events. The fact that there was a good balance between activities that were regular FJC functions and those that were planned especially for the College Reach-Out Participants added to the benefits of this component.

The coordinator for this component has expressed a eager willingness to interface the extra-curricular events with the classroom activities. This is in congruence with the recommendation brought forth earlier in this document to move the program in a more interdisciplinary direction.

The coordinator of this component has also recommended the development of a Student Programming Board consisting of student leaders in the program for the purpose of having them participate in the planning and implementation of this component. This not only provides additional manpower (or womenpower) for this area, but provides an excellent learning experience for the students involved.

11.0 Program Evaluation

There are two phases to the evaluation component for the program. The first phase, the formative phase, consisted of a site visit by the evaluator which was comprised of individual and group meetings with the staff, a staff orientation, and an in-service training workshop presented by the program evaluator. A written report was submitted with observations and recommendations based on that site visit.

The second phase, the summative phase, also involved a site visit with similar individual and group meetings. Written evaluations were completed by students, parents, and staff.

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Copies of the written evaluations are attached with a tally of the responses and a calculated mean indicated for each item. A summary of the responses for each of the instruments follows.

Student Evaluation

Questionnaires were mailed to sixty (60) students. Thirty-five (35) of the students (58%) returned the completed evaluation.

The majority (51%) of the students indicated that they found out about the program from a school counselor. Thirty-one (31%) percent were told about the program by a friend or schoolmate and eleven (11%) percent were informed through the brochure.

Seventy-seven (77%) percent of the students attended the orientation session. Those that did not attend indicated schedule conflicts, late acceptance to the program, uninformed, and transportation problems as the reason for not attending.

Forty-six (46%) percent of the students rated this year's program as excellent. Another forty-six (46%) percent rated it as good and eight (8%) gave it a satisfactory rating.

English and mathematics each received twenty-six (26%) percent of the responses for being the most helpful class. reading was next with eighteen (18%) percent and counseling and computer literacy each had fifteen (15%0 percent. It should be noted that computer literacy was actually a mathematics class. There was also a separate question regarding the counseling sessions.

Eighty (80%) percent of the students stated that they attended the majority of the scheduled sessions. Those that said they had not gave schedule conflicts, work, starting in the program late, and missing the bus as the reason.

Study skills (18%) got the most responses as being a helpful session from the counseling component. This was followed by career development (15%), decision-making skills (12%), meeting other students (12%), self-esteem (9%,) and goal-setting (9%).

Sixty-five (65%) percent of the students rated the cultural and fun activities as excellent. Twenty-three (23%) percent gave these activities a good rating and twelve (12%) said it was satisfactory.

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The counselors had the students complete a questionnaire which included a narrative statement regarding what they liked and disliked about College Reach-Out. Likes included the academic classes, the counseling sessions, cultural and recreational activities, the "environment", and the preparation for college that was obtained. Dislikes included breaks were too short, counseling was not often enough, snacks or lunch was not provided, the food in the vending machines was too expensive, and there weren't enough brain bowl teams.

Parent Evaluation

Questionnaires were mailed to twenty-five (25) parents through a random selection process. Fourteen (14) of the completed forms were returned. This provided a fifty-six (56%) response rate. The questionnaire utilized a Likert-type scale with 4 = strongly agree, 3 = agree, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree, and 0 = inadequate information to assess.

Information regarding the intent of program was rated as 3.5.

Improvement in the academic skills of the son/daughter was rated as 3.0.

Awareness of enrolling the son/daughter in college as a result of parent's participation in the program was rated as 3.4.

Son/daughter realizes the benefits of attending college as a result of participation was rated as 3.1.

Space was allotted for additional comments on the instrument. The program was well organized; the program was beneficial to the students; the program was beneficial to the parents; and the staff was very caring were some of the kudos given to the program.

Staff Evaluation

Fifteen staff members attended the post-assessment meeting in June. The staff separated and met with the other members of the individual components. These small groups discussed both the highlights and problems for their own component and for the program as a whole. One member of each group made a written record of the comments and reported these to the entire group when it reconvened. An audio tape was made of the comments stated in the large group setting. Each staff member also completed an individual evaluation form.

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The staff evaluation utilized a combination of 10 Likert-type scale responses with the same scale as the parents (0-4 points for each response) and six open-ended questions. The calculated means for those responses to the ten Likert-type scale questions are indicated on the instrument in the appendix. A summary of those responses indicate that the teachers and staff were provided with adequate information regarding the program and the expectations of them as staff members. They had confidence in the skills level and sensivity of the staff to the needs of the students. The staff felt that both their individual component and the program in general had a positive effect on the participants. Although still a positive response (3.24), the weakest response was to the statement regarding the timeliness of the provision of resources to meet the needs for their individual job responsibilities.

For the strengths in the program, staff identified communication between the program coordinator and the faculty; quality of the program design and materials; knowledge and experience of staff; the concern of the staff for the students; the comprehensiveness of the counseling component; and last, but certainly not least, the observed increase in the level of self-esteem of the participants.

Weaknesses in the program were identified as the lack of a post-test; lapse of time between the counseling sessions; and the most frequent remark was regarding poor attendance patterns.

Suggestions for innovative ideas yeilded a "Chat and Chew" time slot where students and faculty would have an opportuntiy to eat and socialize in an informal setting (this might occur during a mid-morning break); a "College Cousins" program which would match Reach Out participants with regular FJC students in a Big Brother or Sister type program; academic scholarships to FJC for high achievers in the program; and guest lecturers from the FJC faculty.

Additonal suggestions for inclusion or modifications to the program were more student involvement in planning; more role playing of "real" life situations; a values exploration component; and grouping of students by grade level.

In addition to the evaluation component's focus on the total program operation, there is the individual assessment of each participant's progress. As noted earlier in this report, pre-tests were administered. However, due to schedule modifications, the post-testing was deleted. It appears to be strong feeling among teachers that this was not the preferred course of action. For purposes of accoun-

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tability as well as evaluation, it is strongly recommended that this aspect have a very high priority in the future.

Summary

The College Reach Out Program continues to be well designed and coordinated to meet the needs of the targeted population. There are three primary areas for which recommendations are submitted at this point. It is the perspective of the evaluator that these adaptations and/or innovations could further add to the effectiveness of the program. These areas are increased coordination and planning among the different components of Reach Out and among the other retention programs at the Florida Junior Colleges; adjustments to the program calendar and schedule; and incorporation of some additional elements to increase the motivation of students and staff.

As delineated in the academic component (5.0), with more time for planning built into the schedule, coordinators and teachers should have ample opportunity to coordinate the curriculum across components. It is the understanding of the program evaluator that the college has decided to assign the program administrator, Mr. Cliff Goff, to coordinate this program on a full-time basis. This will allow for much better continuity in planning and organizing the program. In the prior two years notification of funding was not obtained until very late in the year, which allowed for a very short start-up time. Advanced notice of funding, along with the assignment of a full-time coordinator, provides the time and staff resources to implement a in-depth planning process. Staff members can be identified in a timely manner. They can then participate in substantial planning workshops rather than an abbreviated 3 hour session. This will provide the necessary time for the development of an integrated, interdisciplinary curriculum which includes all components of the program.

It was brought to the attention of the evaluator during an earlier site visit that there are several retention programs in operation at the college. Several of these are directed toward seemingly the same high school population, i.e., potential FJC enrollees, or to students entering FJC. It would certainly provide more efficiency for the college to provide for coordination among these different programs. It appears in some instances that there is an overlap or duplication of services, e.g. career education or career development information, college admissions information, cultural enrichment programs, and various aspects of college preparation for high school students. It is apparent that each of

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these programs has a different focus. However, even with different foci and different student populations, the goals involve the same aspiration to better prepare students for and retain students in post-secondary education. It is not suggested that any of the programs be deleted or subsumed by another program, since there is such a high need for these kinds of programs in Jacksonville and the surrounding area. Coordination of the programs would yield efficiency in the utilization of services required by all of the programs. The savings gained by the pooling of resources would provide an opportunity to expand program offerings.

One very prominent observation by a number of the staff concerned the sporadic attendance of the participants. It was noted by several of the instructors that the conflict with spring activities at the various high schools seemed to be the primary reason for the declining attendance pattern. Attendance did not become a real problem until after the spring break in April. This was the same time that weekend activities began to escalate for the public schools, e.g. proms and class trips. With early notification of funding and a full time program coordinator to serve as the administrator, it should be possible to start the program up at an earlier date. If recruitment and selection of students occurred prior to the Christmas holidays, orientation and classes could start immediately after the new year and the program could end before the mad rush of activities in the spring.

Another concern expressed by students, counselors and instructors, was the scheduling of the counseling sessions. Students and counselors felt that the counseling sessions should occur more frequently and for a shorter period of time. Instructors were concerned that they did not see students for a two week span of time because students did not have academic classes on the Saturday that counseling was scheduled. The following compromise should satisfy both "sides". It is proposed that counseling classes be scheduled on a bi-weekly basis. Instead of not having the other classes meet on the same Saturday as counseling, an abbreviated schedule for the academic classes should be considered for the days that the couseling sessions are held. Four periods of 45 minutes each would provide time for all of the classes plus counseling to meet in the same 3 hour time frame. However, this may not provide ample time for the counselors. Perhaps three 40 minute class periods and a one hour counseling class would be a workable alternative.

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The other schedule concern expressed was the beginning time for the sessions. Many students in the program have to leave home quite early because of the distance they have to travel to get to campus. In fact, this may be another reason why absenteeism became a problem. If the program's starting time were moved back an hour (to 10:00 a.m.), it would allow students time to each breakfast in the morning before leaving home (alleveating the problem expressed by several of the students regarding getting hungry during the morning without satisfactory resources for eating). This might motivate more students to attend regularly since they would not have to get up so early on Saturday morning.

Last, but not least, are some recommendations that may serve to increase the level of motivation for staff and students. Staff appear to be quite enthusiatic and committed to the program. However, there is a perception that they do not have a great deal of input at the planning stage of the program. They appreciate the opportunity to give feedback at the close of the term, but feel this would be more valuable at the front end. As noted earlier, an earlier start-up date for identifying the staff would allow for staff to meet for planning purposes for a longer and more extended period of time. They also feel that they do not know enough about what the other components are doing, thus feeling slightly isolated. Again, cooperative and integrated planning and implementation of the curriculum would alleviate this phenomenon. It is also recommended that staff meetings be held on a regular basis for continued planning and better communication. A greater sense of community through the interrelationships established by working together more and a greater sense of ownership fostered by the staff having more input into program design should produce a higher level of motiviation.

Many compliments were stated regarding the Brain Bowl activity. Expansion of this activity which rewards academic excellence should serve a motivator for students to strive more in the classroom. Also, the counseling sessions appear to be one of the favorite components for the students. Increasing the frequency of these meetings should further motivate the students to participate on a more regular basis. Additionally, rewarding good attendance with some type of formal recognition at the awards ceremony should inspire students to put forth more effort to attend regularly. It is the understanding of the evaluator that students were recognized for perfect attendance at this year's awards reception. However, the student had not been

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informed at the beginning of the program that this would occur. With foreknowledge of this recognition, the attendance should improve drastically. Added to this could be some statement in the Contract of Participation that spells out an attendance requirement.

Another motivator for students participating with more vigor in the Reach-Out Program would be the opportunity to earn academic credit for the courses. There is already of precedent for doing this in Jacksonville with the Upward Bound Programs. The fact that they are actually earning high school credits which advance them toward graduation has been quite successful with the other programs that have gotten the clearance to do this through the school system.

Finally, as has been stated in previous reports from this evaluator, it is extremely important that the program not be perceived by the students as simply an extension of the regular school day with the "same old things". Innovation in the presentation of materials, albeit the same basic skills, is critical to the success of the program. Innovative programs require creative thinking and the willingness to try something new. Staff should be continually reminded of the importance of and subsequently recognized for the incorporation of new and effective ideas in the implementation of the program.

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